

Public Safety and Security Committee Hearing March 14, 2013
Testimony regarding Raised Bill 1076
AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF GUN VIOLENCE

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This bill crushes law abiding gun owner's rights with draconian new burdens with little focus on the key issues: how the risk of another Sandy Hook tragedy or crime in our cities is reduced. Bill 1076 must be judged by the impact it has on gun violence related to these two issues before imposing more restrictions on citizens with guns that do not pose a threat. Most gun violence incidents involve young people with no permit, engaged in illegal activities beyond the scope of Bill 1076.

What is achieved by expanding the ban on so-called "assault weapons"? These guns are the most popular sporting arms in the country because of their excellent design. Pistol grips, adjustable stocks, and thumbhole stocks are features on many match and target rifles not normally considered "assault weapons" that will now be banned under Bill 1076. These ergonomic features promote control and safety and do not change in any way how the gun operates. Manufacturers will continue to produce these "assault" rifles as they have since the 1993 Connecticut ban with the offending features removed. The existing two assault feature rule should be retained and not changed to one feature as proposed because the result is compromised safety with no impact on either key issue; the guns are still out there and they shoot the same as those that are banned.

Why aren't permits for rifle owners and pistol owners combined under Bill 1076 into a single gun owner permit which could then be required to buy any gun or ammunition? The existing pistol carry permit process can be adapted to all gun permits with minimum effort and without forcing many gun owners to go through the same tedious process twice at additional expense. Existing carry permit holders can be grandfathered since they

have already submitted to safety courses, fingerprints, background checks and personal references.

Are extensive background checks on gun purchases needed if everyone who can buy a gun has already been vetted and safety trained under the permitting process above? The gun purchase background check can be expedited to only check for changes since the permit was issued.

Restricting ammunition sales to only those who have a permit is a better and cheaper solution to control who has access than insisting on gun registration cards and additional background checks.

If every legal owner is permitted as proposed above, how does the yearly registration of every gun included in Bill 1076 reduce the risks of gun violence? This costly and burdensome new requirement should be deleted because it isn't needed. Instead, the focus should be on eliminating straw buyers, stopping trafficking, and developing the offender data base proposed in this Bill. The fact that 60% of gun offenses are not prosecuted is a major concern because these are people most likely to repeat and that should trouble all of us.

Gun owners want to be safe from those who would do us harm, just like everyone else. One legislator I spoke with pointed out that permitted gun owners aren't the ones he is worried about. Please, let's work together to fix Bill 1076 and get it right.